



# Action on Inclusion

Inclusion: Multiple Lenses  
February 28, 2011 and March 1, 2011

## Alex Dunn

1. Collaboration was stressed as an important goal, however, all of the technological means suggested support individualized learning. How will these means assist us in teaching collaboration? The one critical piece of Smart Inclusion has been the use of the SMARTBoard for whole group instruction. In Ontario, funding allowed us to purchase software and hardware for individual student use which often promoted what you cite above – individualized learning. It was difficult for a teacher to learn one piece of software that was only available to one student on one computer. Often the student would need to work with an EA at the back of the class or in the hallway as the student often used text to speech software, which could be disruptive. Now with the advent of the SMARTBoard students are participating in whole group instruction where it is possible to offer true Universal Design for Learning so ALL students can participate together. Students who use voice output, switch access for example are collaborating with peers in a group lesson.
2. When and where other programs (specialized) are available....who sets the “bar”. Which students go to these programs and which do not – parents, teachers, ABED, In general our District has a process in place whereby any class placement decisions are made by a team including school staff, central office staff, parents and where possible students. The beauty of Smart Inclusion it makes no judgement on where students spend their time or in what programs but strives to include ALL students and have them participate together in shared lessons regardless of class placement.
3. How did you get the teachers to stop using the SmartBoard as an overhead?  
Interesting -- I did make reference to a rubric in the presentation and posted it. I have attached it again here. I think it was important to realize that learning is a process and that we all have to start somewhere. Much like we need to provide students with goals, I think it is important that teachers and school staff are also made aware of rubrics, which can help guide personal goal setting. When we made this rubric available to staff and showed them what characteristics were present at each level .... and given that educators are often Type A personalities, they continue to strive to push the envelope and to keep adding to the rubric.
4. What type of measurement tools were used to collect data? Research shows growth. What were the tools? Data collection was and continues to be very important to us. We want to continue to look at where we have been and where we are going to make it the best if can be for our students. Our tools for our Year 1 Study are posted on [smartinclusion.wikispaces.com/research](http://smartinclusion.wikispaces.com/research). Our Year 2 measures will be posted there as well soon. In Year 1 we completed the following: Parent, teacher, principal, student surveys, school based assessment, review of school behaviour logs, attendance etc and standardized Speech Language Assessments.

# Action on Inclusion

5. What other supports were offered to the teachers? As this was and continues to be a grass roots initiative we keep trying to be as creative as we can to give the teachers all we can realizing that the more we can support teachers, the better off our students will be. School staff were offered a Summer Institute where we run a two day workshop – a good mix of theory and technology. Although Alex Dunn, SLP did most of this initial training, Year 1 teachers became very involved in the subsequent year's institute supporting other teachers who were new to the program. Teachers have been supported through SEA funding (Ministry funding) which allows for training from training companies selected by the District. We have been fortunate to have training support from Advanced Presentation Products our reseller of SMARTBoards as well as SMART Technologies. For students using voice output devices we have been supported by the companies selling the devices eg. Dynavox, PRC. We created [smartinclusion.wikispaces.com](http://smartinclusion.wikispaces.com) so that we could share resources not only within the District but also with interested parties around the world. School staff were directed to on-line resources such as training at [smarttech.com](http://smarttech.com), and resource sharing sites including [boardmakershare.com](http://boardmakershare.com), [intellitools.com](http://intellitools.com) sharing site, SETBC etc. As we now have 70 official Smart Inclusion classrooms but close to 400 unofficial classrooms through programs like Adobe Connect teachers and schools have been reaching out to each other to connect virtually to support each other. Students have also been connecting in this way to share their work and to connect with students in other schools.
6. What kind of training did the SLP team provide to the teachers/school team? How many sessions and time involved? How often was your team in the classroom? Who modified the classroom activities and who chose the tool to support this activity? How does this differ from your previous service model? Our SLP Team offers an assessment and consultation model along with supervision of Speech Language Assistants who offer direct services to students primarily in K- Grade 2. Our team has used the Participation Model at UCDSB extensively over the past 3-4 years and was familiar with tools including the Participation Model Matrix and the Activity Standards Inventory to support students who use augmentative/alternative communication. The use of the Participation Model actually was spreading across our District and was being used for students with a range of communication and/or behavioural struggles. It is a model designed to support students with severe communication challenges and existed long before SMART Boards were every prevalent in schools. It is not a technology model but rather a model that provides a supportive framework for service delivery team members including parents to get together around goal setting and then subsequent programming and intervention. For Smart Inclusion in Year 1 teachers received 3 full days of training from our training partners Bridges Canada. SLPs attended these sessions but as we control our own caseload, the amount of time spent outside of these days would vary depending on the teacher/student involved. The SLPs in the schools completed assessments on the students, ordered equipment including SMARTBoard and other technology. SLPs then assisted school staff with goal setting. SLPs encouraged teachers to pick a subject or a time of the day to focus on and help select goals in consultation with the team. When the trainers arrived, the trainer in consultation with the SLP would help select the programs that would best meet the student/class goal. The teacher did not learn



# Action on Inclusion

zillions of features of what each program could do but rather it was a focused session on the student and the teacher's lesson and how we could go about designing the lesson to make it meaningful for ALL involved. We had done a few projects as a team where our goal was not to simply assess children and put reports into Ontario School Records but to move "Closer to the Classroom". Although we added more technology and theory into our toolkits, the overall goal of Smart Inclusion remained in line with Closer to the Classroom.

7. Great Presentation....Can you describe how the students were grouped for instruction and what adult supports were available? I think this really varied by teacher, by student, by class as far as groupings. In many cases it also varied day-to-day, activity-by-activity depending on the abilities and needs of the students in the class. I think the key for everyone was seeing that by offering multiples means of expression, representation and engagement, that really it became less about the teacher lecturing to the students but rather the whole group participating in the big lesson and then having students go a variety of centers in the classroom that cater most to learning styles and needs – eg. Paper pencil center, wicky stick, plasticine, lego centre, IPAD center, computer centre, SMARTBoard centre, SMART Table centre – whatever teachers have at their disposal. I think this allowed for much more flexible grouping and for all students to be successful participants. When a student has a lesson designed to meet their needs we noticed that the role of the teacher and educational assistant (EA) changes to more of a facilitator role. Interesting too that in many cases the EA, that pre-Smart Inclusion would have been needed at the elbow to assist a given student now sometimes sets the student up but then stands back, or even as the student is now working so successfully as part of the group can now use that time to prepare materials under the direction of the teacher, for an upcoming lesson.
8. You stated...students learn as much by watching as doing. Could you explain? This seems to conflict with research. Thanks for pointing this out. In this particular case I was referring to the work of Sugata Mitra and his particular research around the use of technology with students. He had done some research in remote areas of the world including India where he provided only one computer to a large group of children and observed. Often it was one student who "took charge" and figured out how the technology worked and shared the information with the others. When he did some pre/post testing he discovered that regardless of whether the students were at the computer or part of the learning experience as an observer that their test scores were similar. For more information on this study please refer to [ted.com Sugata Mitra A Hole in the Wall Experiments](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_themselves.html) ([http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/sugata\\_mitra\\_shows\\_how\\_kids\\_teach\\_themselves.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/sugata_mitra_shows_how_kids_teach_themselves.html))
9. Could what you developed work in a virtual and asynchronous environment? ...at your student's own pace without face to face involvement ...ie speech path interventions via video conference or webinars. Interesting concept and a very interesting thought that I need to assimilate with my belief in the human factor. Again Sugata Mitra speaks very much about How Kids Teach Themselves and in a subsequent talk on Ted, speaks of something he experimented with called the "Granny Cloud". In this experiment he brought the human factor in to the students virtually and had a grandmother present via videoconference so that the kids could see



# Action on Inclusion

her and hear her. Her job as I understood from the talk, was not to teach them but be there in support of them, cheering them on, listening to them.

[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/sugata\\_mitra\\_the\\_child\\_driven\\_education.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/sugata_mitra_the_child_driven_education.html). I think though the important thing to consider here for me is supportive/inclusive classroom communities. Our students who have severe communities certainly required significantly less support in a Smart Inclusion classroom where technology and theory were interwoven to support ALL students but they continued to need support both to understand and to complete work – could this all be provided in what Sugata speaks of as the Granny Cloud – I am not sure with students with severe challenges that require assistance for part of their day that this would work in the same way – but they continue to surprise me – and I have seen evidence that other students can take on supportive roles .....

10. How was the model expanded? In Year 1 we targeted 12 classrooms 10 schools. Two schools were the study inside the study as we purchased traditional SMARTBoard set ups, which were much less money in 2 classes and the integrated SMARTBoards in the other 10. We quickly noticed that integrated units that limited shadowing were essential for our students. In Year 2 we expanded in two ways – we established two Smart Inclusion Schools where technology and theory would be practiced in all grade levels and in all classrooms in the school. We wanted to look at the movement of students as well as teachers in a supportive school community. In Year 1 we proved supportive or inclusive classroom communities worked and we wanted to have a look at over a 2 year period whether supportive/inclusive school communities would work. This is the focus of our current two year research initiative. We also added roughly 38 new Smart Inclusion classrooms in other schools in the District bringing our total of Smart Inclusion classrooms in the District to 70. We also have many more nonofficial Smart Inclusion classrooms as Principals started to spend their peripheral budgets to get the equipment and then had their teachers join us in all of the supportive teacher activities cited above. What level of support was provided to the classroom teachers?
11. How much in-class follow-up was provided following initial training? The initial training was merely a Summer Institute to introduce school staff to the technology and theory and give them some hands on time and some time with school personnel who had been down the road before so it was really the start of their Professional Learning Network. Following this introduction, Speech Language Pathologists and other Board and community personnel continued to support the students in the classrooms only now we were all focused on the goals established as part of the Participation Model planning session – everyone working towards a few goals together. We then as described above had training days staggered throughout the year- 3 full days in total with our software/hardware trainers who in Ontario are funded from outside the Board to support. School and Board staff including the SLPs attended these sessions as well.
12. What other disciplines were involved – OT, PT, Vision Consultant? The wonderful thing about it Smart Inclusion was that it was based on the Participation Model which gives a framework for goal setting as a team including all those involved with a student. Depending on the student we would have had SLP, OT, PT, ASD/DD Consultant, Vision, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, community



# Action on Inclusion

partners, parents. We would all get together at the start and look at developing at Participation Model Matrix – not evaluative in any way – but merely a road map of where the student is at this moment in time in academic and social participation, inclusion and independence. Goals come from that planning framework and then depending on what the goals are, it determined who made subsequent visits to the school and when.

13. So if you don't have a SmartBoard then what does that mean – no inclusion? Not at all. I was asked specifically to speak on Smart Inclusion an initiative at Upper Canada District School Board that uses technology including SMARTBoards as well as theory to include ALL students. I have worked my whole 14 year career with students with severe communication challenges and who use Augmentative/Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and tried my best across the grade levels to achieve successful pathways for ALL students. The cornerstone theories such as the Participation Model was not created for the use of technology, but rather as a means of looking at a student's academic and social participation relative to peers. It uses as its base whatever activity is happening in the classroom – with or without technology and ensuring that ALL students including those with severe communication challenges can participate as fully as possible in that lesson. Do I think SMARTBoards and other technology have helped and made this easier for teachers to achieve particularly in the upper grades – yes definitely. There have been some interesting papers written on the other foundational theory of Smart Inclusion – Universal Design for Learning and whether it is possible to practice successful UDL in the absence of technology. I think the bottom line for me is that whatever educational setting students find themselves in, and whatever tools we have in our toolkits, that we do our best to ensure ALL students achieve successful academic and social participation both in whole group and small group instruction.
14. Is there a repository of materials that the teachers have access to---materials for the SmartBoard? In our first year we used our Portal at our District but we were finding teachers were having a hard time accessing it and the storage space was not sufficient to house all of the videos, activities that people wanted to share. We developed [smartinclusion.wikispaces.com](http://smartinclusion.wikispaces.com) as a method of sharing resources not only within our own District but with anyone who was interested and the wonderful thing was they could share back. The wikispace has been a wonderful example of a professional development network.